

THE INSPIRATION OF CHARITY

by

Robert Treat Paine

Address at opening of the third Massachusetts
State Conference of Charities, November 8, 1905.

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DEDICATION.

I dedicate this address to the memory of my honored and beloved mother, Fanny Cabot Paine, who after rearing her own nine children devoted the last fifteen years of her life to caring for the exposed children of the poor in Boston. She was one of the founders of the Boston Children's Aid Society in 1865 and thereafter it was the joy of her life to know the individual boys, who in a steady stream came under the saving influence of that Society, to know their characters, dangers, hopes and possibilities; and then to help them.

Here it was, I think, that Probation work in Massachusetts began. Rufus R. Cook, an officer of the Municipal Court, known as "Uncle Cook," a judicious, trusty and devoted expert, rescued boys from sentence, took them on Probation and started them aright. This work was largely done under the counsel of Mrs. Paine, as a Director of the Society, who loved to give to each and all of these boys, as well as to the boys at the Pine Farm Home of the Society, the watchful care of her motherly heart to the day of her death in 1878.

PREFACE.

The Ideal Charity work in caring for the poor of a great city is done in their homes. It needs a union of two forces, trained expert workers, and a large number of the good people of the city who fully accept their responsibility of Personal Service.

I have tried to develop the necessity of this union.

I have described the origin of Probation work in Boston under "Uncle Cook" in the 60's for the Boston Children's Aid Society and urged the importance of developing this wonder-working system of saving not only boys and girls but adults also by the powerful and uplifting influences of trained experts; but I have especially emphasized the importance of devoted volunteer visitors. In these views, I expect general concurrence.

I have also frankly expressed my judgment, based on my observation and experience as President of the Associated Charities of Boston, since it started more than a quarter of a century ago, that the present system of relieving distress in Boston by the Municipal Board of Overseers of the Poor (aided of course largely by many private relieving agencies) when adequately supplemented by volunteer Friendly Visitors, is better than any other system of which I have knowledge in the world. The required conditions are that this public aid shall be administered judiciously and honestly; and secondly that volunteer Friendly Visitors in increasing numbers and full of the Inspiration of Charity shall accept and do their full share in this blessed work of uplifting those who are down.

THE INSPIRATION OF CHARITY.

Life has three great departments, Education, Labor, Inspiration; and the greatest of these is Inspiration.

Education teaches man his own nature and lifts his life into intelligent relations with his environment.

Labor is a necessity of physical existence.

Inspiration tells man of God; connects man with his Creator; makes divine his relations with his neighbors; clothes these relations with tremendous responsibilities; surrounds them with imperative duties; illumines them with glorious privileges; elevates his human life into a likeness with his infinite Creator.

Educate man to the utmost limit. Make his labor productive in supreme degree, but without inspiration how tame and common-place it all is!

Great men are only created by great needs. Hear the following gloomy words from a recent article of the *London Spectator* entitled "National Deterioration." (Sept. 2, 1905.)

"We agree that there is an absence of commanding figures in almost every department, not only in our nation, but in the world. We have distinguished men in plenty, but few great men. Why this should be so it is hard to say; but perhaps the chief reason is the fact that we have no movement on foot in religion, in art, or in politics, which is capable of striking fire from the flint of potential intellect. When the world is moved by one of the great unforeseen forces, often themselves generated by individual genius, men arise who are fit to cope with them and direct them."

HIGH IDEALS CREATE GREAT MEN.

Happy is the land where spirited young men, crowding up to the gates of learning, are met by the Presidents of their Colleges with lofty counsels of noble inspiration, of honesty, generosity and honor.

Cannot the spirit, which gathers this Conference of men and women from all parts of this sturdy Commonwealth, lend an added touch to the charm and glory of life? The air we breathe is too pure to be tainted with any idea of gain or business. No emoluments, none of the dignity of high office, touch our pockets or our pride. The motive is solely that of the welfare of the people, of the humbler section of the people, of those less favored in the struggle of life, of the poor. This is altruism, absolutely pure. But the career is not without dignity.

More and more is medical science learning the wondrous intricacy of the human body but it still modestly confesses how far it is from perfect knowledge. Surely this is far more true of the human mind and soul and character. The realm of charity includes the whole range of human nature, body, mind, soul and character. How often are each and all of these functions broken down! How hard is the task of the workers in Charity to recreate, uplift, and, so far as possible, to perfect!

No longer the amusement of an idle hour, or the prompting of gushing sympathy, social economy takes rank with noblest sciences. The rise of this study has been so rapid that a score of years ago it was introduced at Harvard as a half course and a bit later the printer's devil would have had Prof. Peabody say that it was raised from a half course to a whole course. Now no College is equipped without a competent Professor of Sociology.

The first fellowship at Harvard College to promote the study of Sociology was founded by myself in 1887. "*The*

income shall be given to one or more graduates of any Department of the University, wishing to study either at home or abroad, the ethical problems of Society, and the efforts of legislation, governmental administration and private philanthropy to ameliorate the lot of the masses of mankind."

The new Schools of Philanthropy, enlarging the curriculum of Columbia, Harvard and Simmons, accept the challenge of needy human nature and aim to educate some of the noblest men and women to deal with this transcendent subject.

Mr. Edward T. Devine, just appointed Professor of Social Economy under the new endowment at Columbia, in his inaugural address outlines the field of social economy as follows:

"Social economy finds its particular field in the study of those conditions, activities and agencies which promote or hinder the making of every individual into an industrially efficient and hence independent human being and in the relief of those who cannot by their own efforts realize the social standards of the community of which they are a part.

"What domestic economy is to the family, what public administrative law is to the state, what political economy is to industry, what sociology is to society at large—all this by very rough analogy and by very imperfect suggestion, social economy may be said to be to the community in its conscious efforts to promote the social good, to redress injustice, to overcome pauperism and disease and crime, to increase the points of beneficent contact with the physical and the social environment. . . . The social economist is the modern organizer of knowledge for the practical good of man."

Applied Sociology is the chariotier or chauffeur to direct the swiftly moving Chariot of Progress of society—no longer stationary in the judgment of thinkers—but

rushing forward, right or wrong according to the impulse wisely given by noble leaders or basely impressed by ignoble apathy or guilty greed.

“ Ten years ago it was assumed that there was peculiar rivalry between sociology and economics. Today the sociologist or the economist who should betray the belief that the two disciplines are really antagonistic would be classed as a survival.”*

Rejoicing at the wonderful progress which the city of New York has made in the empire of charity, with its noble building dedicated to the uses of Charity, with Columbia College establishing an endowed chair of Social Economy, should I not here pause to do honor to MRS. JOSEPHINE SHAW LOWELL, whose recent death has bereaved New York and all other cities where the foremost woman worker in Charity in the world has been loved, honored and followed for a whole generation. New York and the Charities of the world owe more to Mrs. Lowell than history can ever record; a woman of as heroic mould as her heroic husband, Col. Charles Russell Lowell, who was killed in the victory of Cedar Creek.

All my observation of this last third of a century leads up to this exultant conviction that the efforts of the well-to-do to improve the general condition of social life, especially in its lower levels, are now and forever hereafter to command the loyal aid of the noblest natures; that the work is to be undertaken in the fear and love of God; that it will aim at great results and will achieve them; that ghettos, physical and moral, must be exterminated, that in this tremendous and enduring task, inspiration will be found to lift noble natures to noblest ideals.

*A Decade of Sociology. *The Amer. Journal of Sociology.* July, 1905.

This Conference and those to follow in coming years have possibilities and duties of usefulness too vast for imagination.

Think with me of some of these duties.

First — What can best improve the general level of the laborer's life? Ampler earnings, larger income. Surely this calls first for larger product of labor, which larger product being divided between capital and labor will yield a larger share to each. So then must the sociologists deal with the whole problem of increasing the efficiency of labor, especially by wiser methods of education and of manual training. Skill of finger and eye and brain will reward and delight the workers.

Secondly — Even present scales of wages in many branches of labor are inadequate, hours are exhausting, conditions are unjust; men and women, boys and girls who work; many of them are entitled to a better lot and larger reward. Some capitalists are moving freely of their own accord. Others will yield to just appeal. Yet others may be forced by public pressure.

I place therefore ampler earnings and better conditions of labor at the foundation of improvement.

The problem of child life in great cities grows in difficulty and importance with every decade of our national life. The vastness of cities, the cost of land and houses and tenements, the foulness of slums and the lack of playgrounds all aggravate the conditions of city child life; yet men of public spirit are resolved to grapple with and reduce these evils.

Truants, juvenile offenders and neglected children have rights which must be heard and heeded. Great indeed has been the progress but far more remains to do. The last cry has come from underfed city children. But it is not yet clear what action we should recommend or think wise.

Yet one thing is clear. Experts in Boston believe a good part of this evil comes from bad cooking and ignorant choice of foods. Here is a wide field for social teaching, which cooking schools, women's clubs, day nurseries, settlements, are devoting attention to most happily.

The cooking classes in our public schools promise excellent results. One thing more is sure, that not in Boston, nor anywhere in this State, do the evils of underfed children exist to any extent comparable with the evils of New York or London. Before any scheme of municipal feeding is adopted, if ever, we may well watch results of experience elsewhere and see if the evils do not equal or surpass the benefits.

But I must not linger too long in details of Charity.

The last 30 years have witnessed an awakening interest in many forms of Charity all around a growing circle, too numerous here to enumerate. For instance the struggle to destroy slums and improve housing conditions throughout all these years from first to last; and now perhaps latest of all the splendid fight against tuberculosis caused by medical discoveries, how easily it is communicated; and how easily, in its earlier stages, it is cured; with the necessity of sanitariums for the restoration of health; together in short, with the belief that tuberculosis may be wholly eradicated.

Is the faith too sanguine that all these relatively tiny fires are growing into a mighty conflagration? That Charity is inspired to aim at great ideals?

Men and women of open vision and warm hearts are feeling the inspiration of a mighty impulse of Charity. A common purpose unites them, a growing multitude, in a common movement.

The Signs of a New Great Humanitarian Movement are Plain to Read.

This humanitarian movement is gaining rapid headway and irresistible momentum. It promises to be a brilliant feature and a dominant factor of our wondrous civilization in this and future decades.

The main purpose of my paper on The Inspiration of Charity is to induce all members of society to feel the duty and privilege of joining personally in this great movement.

The Glory of life is found in unselfish consecration to the welfare of mankind. Greed has its charms and its delusions, but when laid bare, how base and foul and repulsive it is found. None so poor to do it reverence. Certain rulers of vast Insurance Companies were received with honor and gained enormous salaries, till exposure of base methods revealed them as pirates and covered them with shame, as impossible to cleanse as the blood stain to which Lady Macbeth cried " Out damned spot."

Education and culture lay a broad and solid foundation for any beautiful superstructure, but so long as they rest content with selfish perfection how tame and lifeless they remain. Only when touched with fires from on high, only when kindled with passion for humanity are education and culture idealized and made divine.

What now is this Conference which we welcome from all parts of the old Commonwealth of Massachusetts? Why may we not justly honor it as the most unselfish body of men and women who ever gather in the state? Not in any spirit of mere boasting or vanity do I make this great claim. Surely not for the mere purpose of tickling your ears with a moment's pride or pleasure; but I believe, I rejoice to believe, that according just honor to those who gather at a State Conference of Charities will in no slight measure promote the growth in numbers and influence of these Conferences in the future. My friends,

these Conferences will go on for all time. This is no temporary outburst of an evanescent emotion presently to pass.

The duty of the strong towards the weak, of those who are sturdy and erect to the fallen; of those whom God has richly endowed to those who are naked; the duty, the responsibility, yes the privilege, so exquisitely taught us by our Lord in the Gospel of St. Matthew and in these late days being more fully recognized, will last so long as this world shall endure; and in my firm belief will last through all eternity.

Medical skill may no longer be needed when bodies are laid aside; does this in any degree explain why medical men are so often skeptical of a future life? The legal profession will lack their fees and honors when discords are at an end. Much else of the knowledge of this world will be of no avail. But the opportunity, the privilege, yes the duty of helping our neighbors will go on, will grow from age to age in this world and also as I believe in the great hereafter.

It is for me therefore to welcome the members of this Conference to duties of pre-eminent honor to yourselves and of transcendent usefulness to the community and especially to that portion of it which in a supreme degree needs what you have to give.

Love is the power in this world wherein men most nearly approach and resemble God. Charity is synonymous with love. But we designate as the charities all that whole range of activities wherein love is and ought to be the controlling motive.

We summon to the task of co-operating all the forces of our civilization. We do not beg them to help. We reveal the needs of those in need, but these needs do not beg; they imperatively command, and this command goes broadcast through the whole people.

Does this command go to the very poor to help others in distress? Yes indeed. Most fully, clearly, imperatively. And most fully, graciously, tenderly, most ungrudgingly and instantly is the appeal met by the very poor for their suffering neighbors. Blessed be God that he has filled the hearts of the very poor so full of sympathy for their suffering neighbors.

Sympathy! Oh wondrous word of infinite grace and tenderness and sweetness! Oh word most exquisite and potent in all our speech! Oh word worth all the rest in human thought! Sympathy, genuine, simple, true, the corner-stone on which this whole movement rests. Whoever has no milk of human kindness in his soul may go to the duties for which he is fit. All others we ask to aid this movement.

“In every department of life,” said Phillips Brooks, “whether I look at politics, at government, at social life, and the relation of ethics thereto, whether I look at religion, there is only one word that expresses the cord that binds the human race: that word is sympathy. Present and past religion seems to have been developing conditions under which sympathy might work. The characteristic word of the past hundred years has been Liberty. Liberty is a negative term,—the removal of obstacles, the setting free of conditions under which the essential and absolute and positive power of sympathy, of the relation of man to man under the recognition of their brotherhood, should find its place and expression.” [Life of Phillips Brooks, Vol. 2. P. 486.]

Charity is a two-fold problem; first what is the scope of the work to be done? Second who will do it? I will only speak of this second half, wherein Charity makes bold to demand the aid of a numerous body of thoroughly trained, paid, expert agents, and also the support of every intelligent and public spirited man and woman in the Commonwealth.

I believe Boston is entitled to the credit of being the pioneer among great cities in gathering and organizing a large body of friendly visitors for volunteer work among and for the poor in their own homes. This is the culminating work of Charity, the glory of civilization. Personal service is the greatest thing on earth. Noblest natures feel today the appeal most deeply.

The world does not adequately recognize the power of this appeal and the beauty of the relation to be created. Let me first make application of this priceless truth to Churches and their welfare. The Church which takes small interest in its own poor or in its neighbors' need will surely die, as it ought to die. The Church which deeply feels and then devotedly discharges its duty of caring for its own poor and its needy neighbors will live and thrive and be filled with loyal adherents. Of course the first duty of a Church is to worship God, but we believe that worship is false and base which is content within its own beautiful walls and does not send out its best into the homes of its poor.

We ask therefore every Church to accept the ideal of judicious consecrated work among its own poor, not that only, but to open its doors so wide and free that the poor, who too often feel repelled by their poverty, may rather be attracted by the warmth and heartiness of their welcome. So shall Churches live. So shall the taint lose its sting that plain folk are not welcome, and that "workingmen look into the open door of the Church as they pass, only to throw into it a curse." To all these evils, there is no better cure, if any so good, as personal service.

Think what a tremendous diminution of poverty and distress and ignorance will come about when our Churches wake up to this sphere of duty; personal service among their own poor, and among all the unchurched poor whom they might attract in and uplift.

But next to this duty of Churches towers up the transcendent duty of the whole body of the well-to-do in the community. The battle of civilization is to be fought; and won or lost in the homes of the poor. To visit the poor, those in any form of distress, in their own homes, is the supreme need of modern life and especially in great cities.

Friendly visiting is the exquisite flower of human sympathy. In Massachusetts it exists already in some degree. It has taken root and grows. Charles S. Loch, the Secretary of the London Charity Organization Society, probably the greatest living authority on practical charity and especially in out-door relief, said in 1893 as the Conference in Chicago drew near, "The second institution to which we should like to refer as evidently held in high estimation by many leading Charity Organization Society thinkers is that of Friendly Visitors.

"How, in America, they manage to obtain qualified friendly visitors on a large scale we do not know.

"The World's Fair at Chicago will give any who wish the opportunity of noting the enthusiasm and hopefulness of the American Societies at first hand." (Charity Organization Review, July, 1893, P. 46.)

New York has not succeeded in enlisting a very large number of Friendly Visitors in her Charity Organization Society work, nor has Philadelphia, or Chicago. Boston has boasted, shall I say, of nearly a thousand now for several years past, 720 at the present time.

I feel keenly the difficulty of the task in great cities. Distances are great. Often the mass of distress which crowds together into vast aggregations, often of many nationalities, some of them far below any American standard of decency, or honesty, or ambition, terribly aggravates the problem. No wonder conditions in New York seem to make personal service of voluntary friendly

visitors almost hopeless. Yet we cannot abandon the task which in creating or permitting great cities God has thrown before His favored children. At least we can recognize the duty and its tremendous difficulty and the infinite need and ask what we and our children can and will do about it. A task of duty is at least half done when Americans fully recognize its existence and hear its appeal.

TRAINED EXPERT WORKERS.

One other power exists; the service of trained bodies of expert workers; experts themselves in the wondrous and infinite arts of uplifting life, and teachers to all the countless volunteers who, full of enthusiasm, still need guidance.

No man more readily than I renders honor to the paid workers among distress. No man more heartily rejoices to see them grow in variety of employment, scale of remuneration and in public, honorable recognition. I wonder if anyone believes as fully as I believe that gifts of money, by will or otherwise, to employ trained experts, either in a Society or a Church, to work among the poor, can be productive of more good to the very needy, than any other charitable method of distribution. Education is the best gift to the child. The education of poor persons to rise out of their distress and to be able to take care of themselves, the education which in countless ways trained experts in Charity can give in their ministry to the poor is of surpassing value.

First of all recognition is due to the admirable trained staff of agents of the Overseers of the Poor throughout the State. You who come from other municipalities can award just praise to the agents of your own localities. Boston has been the seat of my charitable work for more than a quarter of a century and I rejoice to bear my

testimony to the excellence and thoroughness and sound judgment of the agents of the Overseers of the Poor in Boston.

The staff of the State Board of Charities equally deserves praise. I refer to these bodies in order to lead up to another class of officers, the youngest in the State, I mean the Probation Officers, few in number, many of them devoted in their labors and charged with functions of supreme importance.

The system of probation is just beginning. So far as I know, Uncle Cook, forty years ago, began this work in Massachusetts; an officer of the Municipal Court in Boston, where boys, and less frequently girls, were brought for various misdemeanors. Uncle Cook learned their story and the facts and often asked the Court to put them under his charge, he going bail and they reporting to him from time to time. Adults also came under his care. He became an agent of the Children's Aid Society in Boston and his divine work of saving the children grew apace.

No one knew better than he that while imprisonment could debase and lead on to ruin, the sympathy of a friend could uplift and rescue many and many a boy and girl; yes and adults also. This was the birth of the Probation System in Massachusetts.*

*The first use of the Methods of Probation by Uncle Cook in 1863 is described in the first report of the Boston Children's Aid Society, from 1863 to June, 1865.

"When the Association was first organized, Mr. Cook consented to act as its agent in behalf of boys confined in the jail. By his desire, and with Sheriff Clark's permission, some members of the Association visited the jail weekly, to distribute books from the library to the boys; to talk with them and to gain their confidence, in the hope of helping them to a better course when they left the jail.

The assistance of a regular visitor was found necessary. . . . It has been a large part of her work to inquire about the previous

One of our sessions will be devoted to work for children. We shall hear much of probation, but I have met no one who hopes for as great a harvest of good for the community from the system of Probation as I do my-

character and the homes of the boys who are brought for trial. Mr. Cook is in daily attendance at the Police Court, and at the monthly sittings of the Superior Court. His opinion is usually consulted, and has great influence as to the disposition to be made of young offenders; and his judgment is much guided by the accounts furnished him by Miss Burnham. This, with the visiting in jail, which has of late mainly fallen upon her, and visiting the boys whom Mr. Cook has put on probation, or any children whom he wishes her to inquire about, comprise the duties which Miss Burnham performs.

Mr. Cook's labors have a much larger scope. He is, as has been said, in Court every day, and present at the trials of all children brought there. He studies their cases; and when he thinks that there is good hope of their amendment, without further punishment, he gives bail for them, or gets the judge to put them on probation. He has thus bailed many boys, saving them from the injurious effect of an imprisonment in jail.

It may not be generally understood that there are two classes of boys in jails. One class consists of those children who have been tried and sentenced in the Police Court, and who, in consequence of non-payment of fines, are held in jail for various periods of time, from a few days to several months. Boys of the other class are charged with offences that must be tried in the Superior Court. They are detained in the jail from the time of their arrest till the next sitting of the Court. They are often very young, but eight or nine years old, and may have to wait some weeks for trial.

A child who breathes the atmosphere of crime inevitable in a jail, however well conducted, will probably come out ready to commit a fresh offence, and is likely to make crime his profession.

No doubt some punishment is salutary. On his first entrance in jail, a boy is usually frightened, and in a softened state of mind, and might be touched to better issues; but the golden moment is too often lost, and he learns instead that there is a whole world of crime, which has its own occupations and its own pleasures; and this in spite of strict regulations against intercourse, which are well enforced. The quick eyes and curiosity of a boy who has no other occupation than such studies, can learn much in a short time.

It seems impolitic, as well as cruel, to take a child of eight or ten years and to put it where the influences are favorable to crime;

self. In countless new ways, as yet untried, probation will be found a wonderful power to save persons on the ragged edge from falling into the slough; to rescue those who have once yielded to temptation; to restore to honest life many who have seen the folly of their ways.

The brutal and effete theory of punishment that a given crime must be counterbalanced by a given amount of punishment, let us say of imprisonment, may well be exploded by a more commonsense as well as far more humane system which studies and acts on the personal equation.

Here is my faith in a nutshell. Never imprison anyone, whether before or after conviction, when there is a fairly good chance that the wholesome and saving influence of a stout, kindly Probation Officer can keep this present criminal from continued crime.*

but this, as we heard an officer of the jail say, is "what Christian Boston does for her children."

Extract from the Second Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society, June, 1865 to June, 1866.

"Mr. Cook's system of taking boys on probation, by consent of the Court, instead of as formerly, having them sent to jail to await trial, has worked most admirably. During the past year Mr. Cook has received at the Police Court 88 boys, on probation for six weeks each; of these only four had to be returned to the Court as delinquent, and sent to the School-ship or Westboro'. At the Superior Court he has received 35 boys on probation for six months each, all for the crime of larceny; of this number only three were surrendered to the Court. These probation boys are obliged to report to him in person every week at his house or at the Court, and so he is enabled to keep an eye upon them. It proves a constant check upon them, and their evident desire in many cases to improve is very gratifying.

Bailed on probation of all sorts including adults 318."

*To illustrate the evil results of imprisonment, even in so excellent an institution as the Concord Reformatory hear the story of a boy a week or two ago who, on a second or third arrest, asked the Judge to give him a life sentence rather than only a two year term. He assigned as a reason that he had been ruined at Concord by the

Never keep any imprisoned convict in jail, reformatory or prison, one day after experienced Trustees and Managers of the institution decide that the steadying and uplifting aid of Probation Officers can keep the convict, if released on ticket of leave, in innocent life. Accepting these general principles, exceptions may of course arise.

Contrast our present system and its sad results with what we may reasonably hope from a well developed probationary system. The convict goes to the House of Correction for one, or three, or five years, meets criminals as bad as himself or worse, learns all of crime they can teach, comes out embittered, friendless, unemployed and of course in danger of renewed crime. No wonder some convicts go down 100 times or more. Instead of all this sad story of hopeless life, if he responds to appeals to his better nature and promises reform, let him go out at the end of a year or two, or sooner, whenever the experience of the Trustees thinks best. He knows that he goes out with a string and will return if he does not behave. He is under the guidance of a probation officer, who may well be a selected person of high character and strong influence, who will aid him to find employment, and to keep it and to save his life. Am I too sanguine if I claim that out of ten convicts, who under the present system may appear in Court, there would be hardly one under an efficient probationary system?

Who that knows the saving power of a friend will not be ready for this reform? Who that can imagine the gloom and loneliness of a friendless life will not be ready?

variety and methods of crime which he had there been taught so that he thought it hopeless for him to attempt to lead an honest life.

Perhaps this story was a lie, yet it describes results which too frequently come from close contact with things which innocence abhors.

If the number of imprisoned inmates were reduced 10 or 20 or 40 per cent., think also what an economy would ensue, and this too after all salaries of probation officers were paid.

Nor will we be deterred by the threat that of all of these discharged convicts a few may escape the eye of the probation officers and return to crime. We reply that the worst condemnation of the present system is that so many convicts, after imprisonment for their whole term, so soon lapse again into crime and reappear in jail.

The source of guilt, culminating in crime, too often is the utter lack of any friendly support anywhere in life, for all those thousands who make the census of our jails and prisons. The promise and potency of probation will come from the wondrous influence of a true friend under the most favorable circumstances.

I hardly dare to tell myself, I am quite unable to tell you, how great things I believe probation, well developed, will accomplish in saving boys and girls who may be on the ragged edge of danger, and also in saving, restoring, recreating men who at present in this State, as elsewhere, go to ruin. Would to God, that here again, as in other ways heretofore, Massachusetts may wisely and successfully take the lead.

Accept what I have said in favor of developing the system of Probation as an illustration of the far-reaching work still facing us for charity to study and achieve. The prison system, inherited from the past, was intended in ancient days to punish crime. Perhaps it was hoped that its tendency would be to lessen or prevent crime. It has been a ghastly failure. Today we accept the double ideal of preventing crime and reforming the criminal. The stupendous totals of arrests in Massachusetts and of criminals in confinement, the vast annual cost

of this business, the disastrous failure to reform, all startle us at the magnitude of the problem which challenges the brains, the sympathy, the charity of Massachusetts.

No wonder that charity hears a passionate appeal from all this infinite need. No wonder that this appeal from these countless voices of the victims of our brilliant civilization, voices too often inarticulate, inaudible, will come as an inspiration.

Do not leave the whole burden upon the paid staff of Probation Officers, however numerous and devoted they may be. Why may not hundreds of volunteers be found in the community ready to befriend these victims of our civilization? Working with and guided by the paid staff they can add splendidly to its efficient work. When this service has begun countless ways will be found in which a friend can be of infinite value to the multitude of persons whom Massachusetts does not wish to imprison but prefers to rescue by the personal service of a friend.

RELIEF OF THE NEEDY IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

This is of course the great task of Charity. Many agencies exist to deal with special needs; Children's Aid Societies, Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Diet Kitchens, District Nurses; these are only mentioned (with admiration) to suggest to our thoughts what an interesting variety of agencies has sprung up to deal with special needs.

But will not every one agree that the great residuum of distress in the community remains as the fundamental problem? At any rate of it I will now speak.

First let me lay aside this evening the problem in towns and small cities, where Charity, when inspired to do its best, will need probably some slight organization but will delight to find the love and devotion of neighbors

ready to act, judicious in methods, and potent to help, uplift and restore. This beautiful task is worthy of special treatment in a special paper.

But it is in great cities that the problem challenges the brains of experts and demands the devotion of saints. The startling fact that after all these years since the great reform of 1834 in England, that country is on the eve of creating a Royal Commission to reconsider the whole problem of out-door relief, justifies, if it does not compel the conclusion that the system of the last 70 years in England has at last been found a failure.

Of course, we, who believe that Charity is inspired from on high and executes the will of God by the hands of His children, cannot sit down in despair at any supposed failure of the charitable energies of England to cope even with the aggravated and increasing distress of her people.

Has the ideal method ever been thought out and stated in America? In my judgment it has not. Let us see.

Everyone knows how tremendous is the task of Out-Door Relief. Many of us recall vividly the acute discussion of 1888 between Benjamin Pettee of Boston and Alfred T. White of Brooklyn; Mr. Pettee, who has served the Board of Overseers as Secretary for more than a third of a century, defending the Massachusetts system of Out-Door Relief by the public board of Overseers of the Poor, and Mr. White, backed up by the judgment and the able writings of Seth Low, maintaining that public relief was not only needless to prevent suffering but increased the evils which it was designed to relieve.

These two systems have continued substantially unchanged since that day. Mr. Devine, the able Secretary of the New York Charity Organization Society still ably maintains that "the chief argument against out-door relief however is that from experience the five leading

cities of the sea-board, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, counting Brooklyn as a separate city, have found it possible to look after their poor without out-door relief, and it would appear without serious disadvantages.' (Principles of Relief, page 309.)

Some of us in Boston, on the other hand, fear that private relief is not able to provide in those cities prompt and adequate relief needed to prevent serious suffering, and we cannot accept the doctrine that the poor have no rights to be relieved in grave distress by the public, even while we recognize that such a right when acknowledged may beget a dangerous reliance upon public aid.

Here in Massachusetts the English system of out-door relief by the public authorities landed on Plymouth Rock with the Mayflower and has always existed. Now that the movement is so pronounced, one might almost say throughout the world in the direction of *enlarging the duties of the State* or municipality over commerce, railroads, insurance and labor, any effort to abolish by law the system of public relief in Massachusetts would not only be certain to fail, but would probably stir up such violent opposition as to break down even existing safeguards.

The reports of the Boston Board of Overseers of the Poor in recent years show excellent results.

"By the table given in the last report it will be seen that in the last twenty years the amount of aid given directly to the poor has increased but a few thousand dollars from \$73,124.57 to \$79,725.68. This increase of \$6,601.11 in twenty years is coincident with an increase in the population of the city from 384,720 to about 620,000. The number of families aided by the Overseers has, however, decreased in the same period from 4,403 in 1884 to 2,248 in 1904, a decrease of 2,155

families. At the same time, the amount given per family has increased from an average per family of \$16.61 in 1884 to an average per family in 1904 of \$35.46. We are giving each family to-day \$18.85 more than in 1884. Stated differently, we are expending \$6,601.11 more to care for 2,248 families than we spent in 1884 to care for 4,403 families. In other words, we are gradually approaching an ideal state of things by reducing the number of paupers and adequately aiding those who really need the aid."

(Forty first Report Board of Overseers of the Poor of Boston for the year ending Jan. 31, 1905, Page 7.)

20 YEARS.	POPULATION.	AID.	FAMILIES.	AMOUNT PER FAMILY.
1884	384,000	\$73,100	4403	\$16.61
1904	620,000	79,700	2248	35.46
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	Increase	\$6,600	2155	\$19.00

Accepting, therefore, a system so firmly rooted in our soil, is it not possible to develop with it collateral assistance which can make the system ideally perfect?

The system today in Boston, and very widely throughout the State, including especially the scope of work carried on by the State Board of Charities, provides an excellent trained staff of officers who discharge their duties promptly, vigilantly, efficiently and humanely. I believe the work is absolutely free from politics or graft. The investigation is so thorough that it almost surely sifts out frauds and repels those who shrink from a thorough investigation. In my judgment, it relieves need and does not create it. I do not believe private agencies could do this relief work with equal thoroughness.

What now is the ideal consummation of this work among the poor? It is often found in the beautiful uplifting work of a large number of friendly and devoted

visitors who go among them as friends, entering their homes and lives, bringing to them cheer and sympathy and counsel, even advising with them as to some of the serious problems of life and often aiding to carry out wise plans. This is the glory of the Associated Charities work in Boston. This work of friendly visitors exists more or less in other cities of the State. Without this personal, sympathetic work, wisely, beautifully, devotedly done, mere relief, whether by public officers or private agents, will be a wretched failure.

I am speaking of what I know, and I declare thus publicly, as the judgment based upon my long experience in these matters, that unless the well-to-do elements in the community can be interested in this task of helping and uplifting their neighbors in distress, any system of attempting to relieve distress will be, as it should be, a failure.

To put the whole task upon paid agents takes away from the favored class their most imperative duty. It robs their life of human interest, it tends to make life narrow, selfish, unsympathetic.

I believe this necessity of JOINT action by a paid staff of expert relieving officers, whether employed by the public or by private agencies, together with the friendly uplift of volunteers, each keeping within their own province and recognizing the wisdom and duty of co-operating in action, has never been adequately and publicly proclaimed. I invite to it the attention and favorable judgment of this Conference. I commend it to the consideration and approval of similar bodies in other states. I believe that Massachusetts has made the discovery of how best to deal with this problem of caring for the poor in their own homes. The results of this two-sided work can already be seen. I feel sure that it will never be abandoned but rather will grow with increasing wisdom and momentum.

My subject, The Inspiration of Charity, when its whole significance is fully felt, points to the revolution and recreation of social life. Look backward and the historic glance can only with difficulty measure the marvellous leaps and bounds with which the evolution of social well-being has gone forward.

Does any one dream for an instant that this evolution has reached its end? Because if not, our task is, on the assumption that the chariot of the Lord will still (and I believe will always) go forward, to seek in what directions and with what allies it will advance.

The next social advance of the world will surely be that a mighty movement of sympathy, irresistible and contagious, will attract in increasing numbers, the well-to-do, the rich, the happy, the cultured, those to whom God has given two or three or ten talents, towards those who have only their one tiny talent or perhaps almost none at all. Human sympathy is to be a dominant force in life, subjective and objective.

Subjectively, the well-to-do, however cultured or wealthy, if wholly selfish, will be too wretched for any joy.

The objective influence of this outpouring avalanche of sympathy will show in the personal touch²² of friendly visitors, great numbers of whom will be ready to befriend

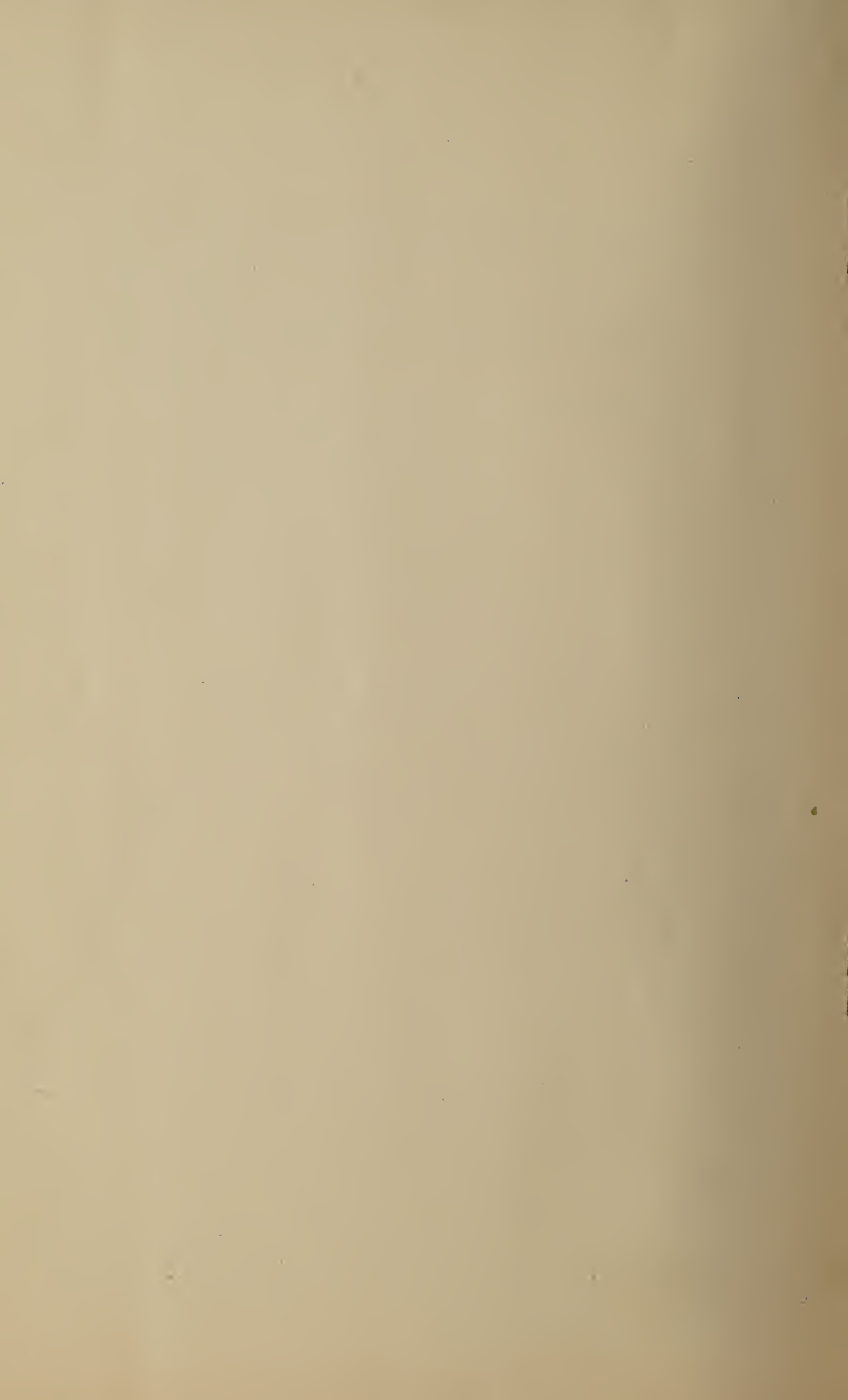
every truant and juvenile offender,

every discharged prisoner and criminal out on probation,

in fact to go into every home of need in streets and alleys all through the towns and cities of the State.

Paid agents will grow in the magical excellence of their work, but every such agent will need and find many a friendly volunteer to carry cheer and friendly sympathy, the freshness of life, the joy of living into all these multitudes of homes.

Only when both of these forces, expert training and volunteer devotion, go hand in hand and work together, each subordinate to the other, will the Inspiration of Charity dare to claim that the next mile-stone has been reached in the onward career of the social progress of mankind.



HV88.M4 Paine, Robert Treat.

M38

1905

The inspiration of charity; address .
of Robert Treat Paine, president of the
third Massachusetts state conference of
charities, at the opening of the confer-
ence in Boston, November 8, 1905.

Boston, W. B. Clarke co., [1905] 30 p.
23 cm.

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P16

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814

Charity

Social work - Mass.

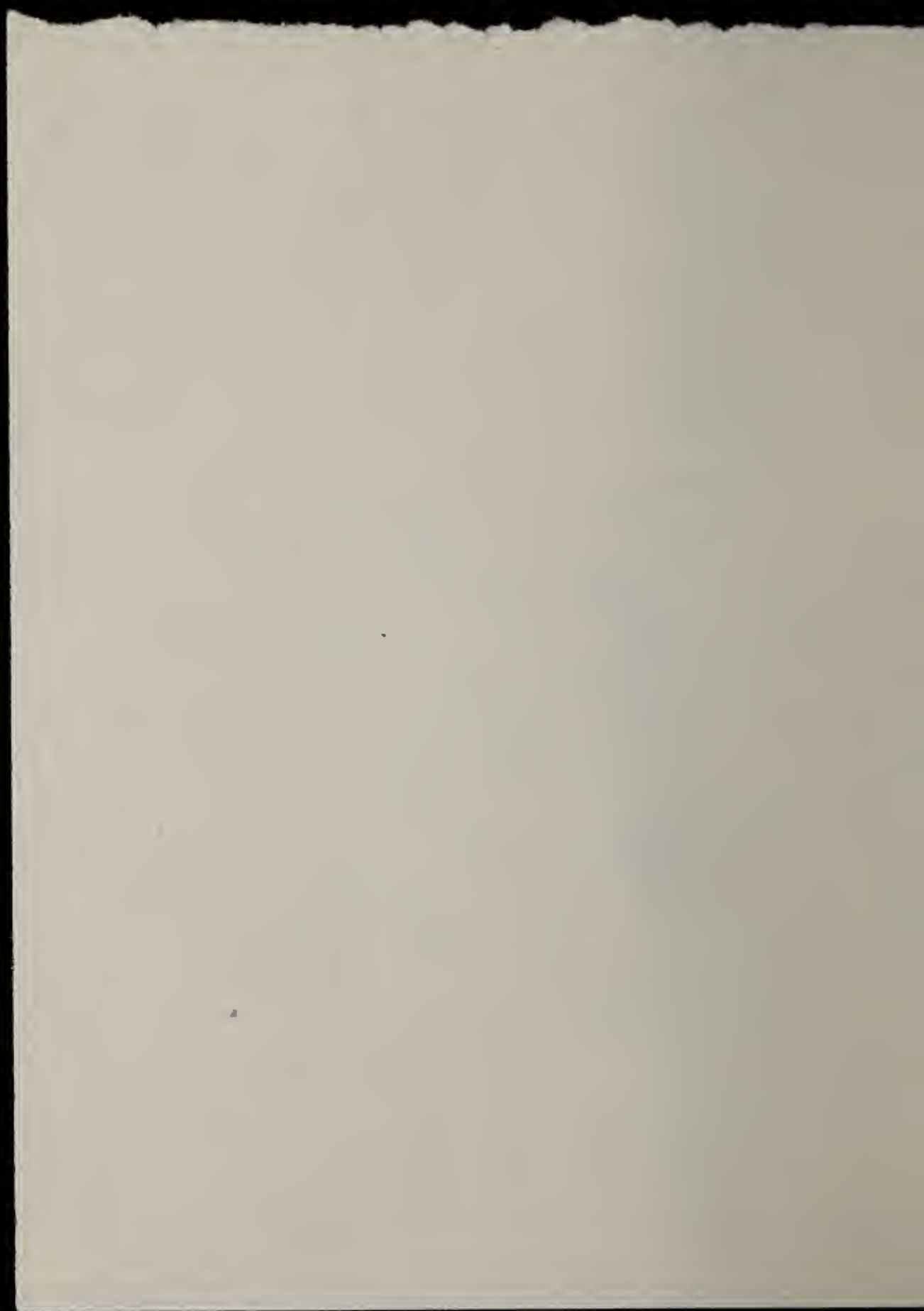
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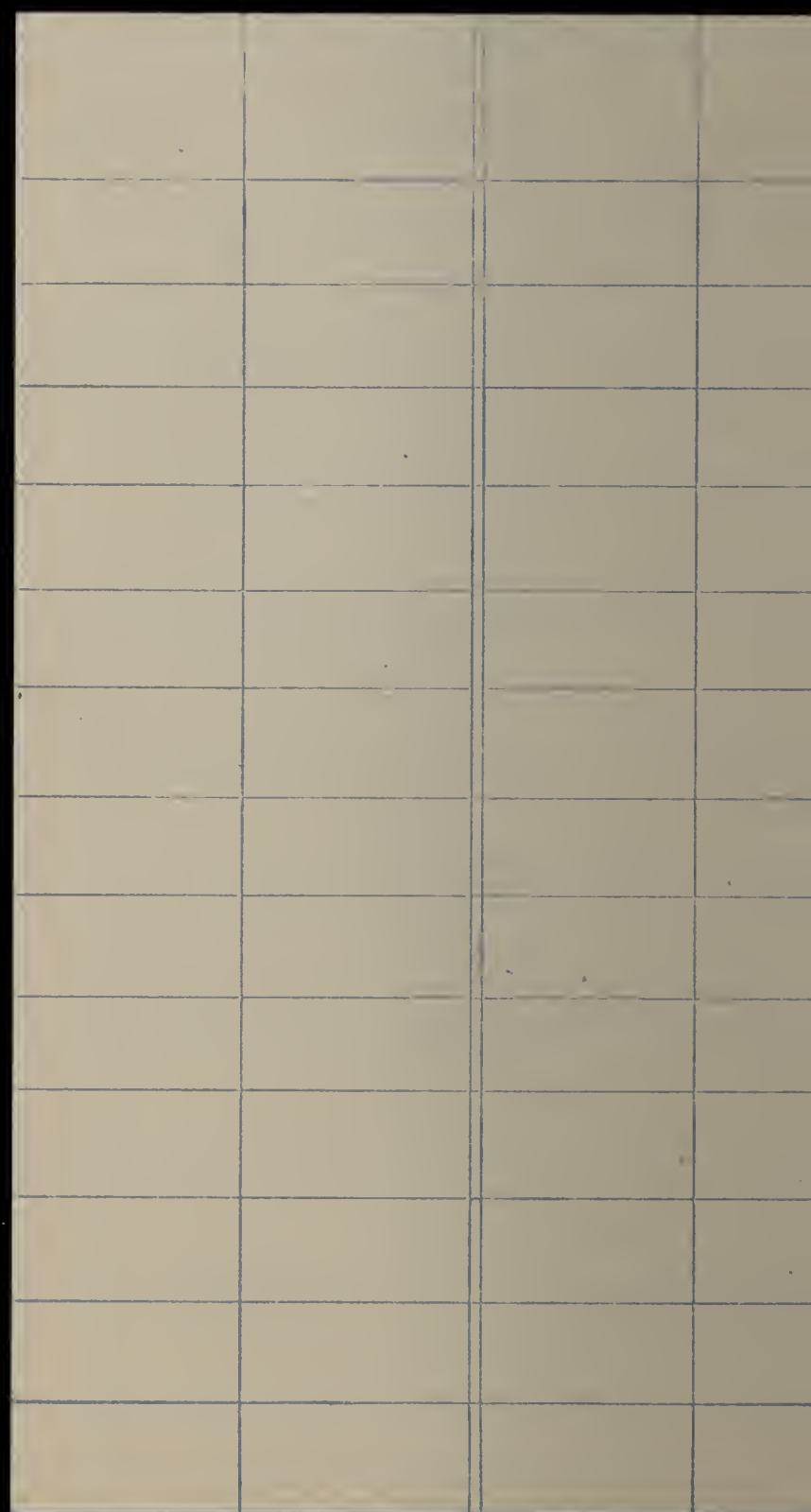
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